



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

November 15, 2010

To the President of the United States, President of the Senate, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives

I am pleased to submit the *Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) FY 2010 Performance and Accountability Report*. This report highlights our accomplishments in improving the timeliness, accessibility, and quality of health care and benefits service delivery.

This past year VA has made significant progress in areas important to America's Veterans. In an effort to eliminate the claims backlog, we processed more than 1 million claims. To combat Veteran homelessness, more than 16,000 homeless Veterans were provided with permanent housing through our voucher program. To provide timely access to VA health care, 99 percent of primary health care appointments were completed within 30 days of the patient's desired date. In addition, we increased access to burial benefits with the opening of the new Washington Crossing National Cemetery which will serve approximately 580,000 Veterans in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. VA is also extremely proud to report our progress in financial stewardship of VA resources as evidenced by the receipt of our 12th consecutive unqualified (clean) audit opinion on VA's consolidated financial statements, and the successful remediation of three of VA's four material weaknesses, a 75 percent reduction in just one year.

The Report also contains a summary of the key challenges facing the Department and our strategies to address them — challenges that we are aggressively tackling to strengthen the quality of our programs, maximize value and efficiency, and enable us to meet the ever-changing needs of Veterans, their families, and survivors.

VA has made remarkable progress on Departmental priorities during FY 2010. We have identified and are implementing fundamental changes to transform VA into a 21st century organization that is people-centric, results-driven, and forward-looking. The Department published a new strategic plan, which is the cornerstone to achieve this transformation to enable us to sustain momentum into the future, and fulfill our Nation's lifetime commitment to the men and women who have served this country in uniform.

This strategic road map includes a relentless focus on accountability. The Department will accomplish this through positive leadership, teamwork, and dedication. We will continue to build on initiatives that address and fix problems — changing the way Veterans are served and creating modern management systems and new business processes to improve services.

VA is passionately committed to providing Veterans and their families with the very best health care and services in the 21st century. We continue to work hard to build trust with Veterans, their loved ones, and the American people.

Sincerely,

Eric K. Shinseki